WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image data retrieval apparatus for retrieving desired image data from an image database having a plurality of items of image data registered therein, comprising:

an extractor for extracting an image of a predetermined region from said image data registered in said image database;

a retrieval key image designator for designating said extracted image as an image serving as a retrieval key; and

a retriever for using said retrieval key image to retrieve from said image database image data containing an image identical or analogous to said retrieval key image.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said image of said predetermined region is an image of a face of a person.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said designator designates more than one said retrieval key image.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said extractor extracts more than one said image of said predetermined region from said image data in said image database for storage and said designator designates a desired retrieval key image from said more than one image of said predetermined region stored.

5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein said retriever uses said designated retrieval key image to retrieve more than one item of image data containing an image identical or analogous to said retrieval key image.

6. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein said designator designates more than one retrieval key image.

7. In order to retrieve desired image data from an image database

having a plurality of items of image data registered therein, an image data retrieval program causing a computer to effect the steps of:

referring to said plurality of items of image data registered in said image database, and extracting an image of a predetermined region included in said image data;

designating said extracted image of said predetermined region as an image serving as a retrieval key; and

using said designated retrieval key image to retrieve from said image database image data containing an image identical or analogous to said retrieval key image.

8.   An image data retrieval apparatus for retrieving desired image data from an image database having a plurality of items of image data registered therein, comprising;

a retrieval key image extractor for extracting images serving as a retrieval key for search through said plurality of items of image data registered in said image database;

a storage for storing said extracted retrieval key images therein;

a retrieval key image designator for designating a desired retrieval key image among said stored retrieval key images; and

a retriever for using said designated retrieval key image to retrieve from said image database more than one item of image data containing an image identical or analogous to said retrieval key image.

9.   The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said extractor extracts an image of a predetermined region included in said image data registered.

10.   The apparatus of claim 9, wherein said image of said predetermined region is an image of a face of a person.

11.   In order to retrieve desired image data from an image database having a plurality of items of image data registered therein, an image data retrieval program causing a computer to effect the steps of:

extracting an image serving as a retrieval key for search through
said plurality of items of image data registered in said image database;

storing in a storage more than one said retrieval key image extracted;

designating a desired retrieval key image among said more than one retrieval key image stored; and

using said designated retrieval key image to retrieve from said image database more than one item of image data containing an image identical or analogous to said retrieval key image.

12. An image data retrieval apparatus for retrieving desired image data from an image database having a plurality of items of image data registered therein, comprising;

a retrieval key image extractor for extracting an image serving as a retrieval key for search through said plurality of items of image data registered in said image database;

a storage for storing more than one said extracted retrieval key image therein;

a retrieval key image designator for designating more than one desired retrieval key image among said more than one retrieval key image stored; and

a retriever for using said more than one designated retrieval key image to retrieve from said image database image data containing an image identical or analogous to said retrieval key image.

13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said extractor extracts an image of a predetermined region included in said image data registered.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein said image of said predetermined region is an image of a face of a person.

15. In order to retrieve desired image data from an image database having a plurality of items of image data registered therein, an image data

retrieval program causing a computer to effect the steps of:

extracting an image serving as a retrieval key for search through
5   said plurality of items of image data registered in said image database;

storing in a storage more than one said retrieval key image
extracted;

designating more than one desired retrieval key image among said
more than one retrieval key image stored in said storage; and

10   using said more than one designated retrieval key image to retrieve
from said image database image data containing an image identical or
analogous to said retrieval key image.

16.   An image data retrieval apparatus for retrieving desired image
data from an image database having a plurality of items of image data
registered therein, comprising:

an image obtainer for obtaining information corresponding to an
5   image;

a table for having recorded therein said information and an image
serving as a retrieval key, correlated with each other;

a converter for referring to said table to convert said information to a
retrieval key image; and

10   a retriever for using said retrieval key image to retrieve from said
image database image data containing an image identical or analogous to
said retrieval key image.

17.   The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said information obtainer
obtains more than one item of information.

18.   The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said image of said
predetermined region is an image of a face of a person.

19.   The apparatus of claim 18, wherein said obtainer obtains
information in a form of a name of a person.

20.   In order to retrieve desired image data from an image database having a plurality of items of image data registered therein, an image data retrieval program causing a computer to effect the steps of:

obtaining information corresponding to an image;

converting said information to a retrieval key image with reference to a table having recorded therein said information and an image serving as a retrieval key, correlated with each other; and

using said retrieval key image to retrieve from said image database image data including an image identical or analogous to said retrieval key image.